

***Pandemic Planning
Conference Call
April 17, 2006
Notes***

Participants included: Commissioner John Stephen, Mary Ann Cooney, Jose Montero, Lloyd Peterson, Dr. Robert Gougelet, Bruce Cheney, Laura Vigor, Linda Slowik, Rick Silverberg, Wendy Dumas, Marie Wawrzyniak, Carol Tubman, George Klauber, Kate Kokko, John Messier, Brad Manning, Leah Chase, John Bennett, Paul Robidas, Russ Timmons, Kerry Craig, Lisa Morris, Susan Lavorak, Nicole LaPointe, Martha McLeod, Tim Soucy, Anna Thomas, Mary Nelson, Mike Tremblay, Heidi Peak, Norma Jakowitz, Chris Lister, Roger Hatfield, Josselin Villioti, Tom Morrison, Mary Cook, Georgette Shapiro, Chief Christopher LeClaire.

Commissioner John Stephen welcomed the participants in the pandemic planning conference call. He said that the conference call was a chance for local providers and emergency management to discuss the plans for the funds that will be coming from the Federal Government. He said that the disbursement of funds was voted on by the Pandemic Planning Coordinating Committee (PPCC) with an emphasis on coordinated planning from the ground up with local communities participating aggressively in the planning process. Minutes from the PPCC meeting are available on the DHHS website at <http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/CDCS/ppcc.htm>

Commissioner Stephen said that with the All-Hazards Sites model, local communities would work together in developing the response plans. In a real incident, the local government would be asked to respond, with the State providing assistance. That is why this model was chosen. This type of model has been looked at in the past, such as with the Smallpox planning process. It is important to keep a worthwhile, consistent All-Hazards plan and to begin to look at that at the All-Hazards sites.

Since the PPCC approved the funding allocation, the next step is to bring the request to accept and expend the funds to the Fiscal Committee for approval. Once the Fiscal Committee approves the state to accept and expend the \$813,000, the goal for the Department of Health & Human Services is to make those funds available to the communities in a way that is consistent with the requirements set forth by the Federal Government and PPCC.

This conference call is a chance to address the questions and concerns of the communities as they begin to look at the best way to pool resources and engage in the planning process. Commissioner Stephen noted that some communities, such as Derry and Salem, are already looking to work together in this process. He said that it is important to remember that each community will need to approve and sign a Memorandum of Agreement. The Pandemic Planning Coordinating Committee will be approving preliminary plans from the regions. This preliminary plan will include a description of how the funds will be spent along with a proposed budget. In order to

accept the funds, each region will need to appoint a fiscal agent. The contracts will need to go through the Governor & Council process. The goal is to get the funds out within the next few months so it's important to move the process quickly. That is why an opportunity to ask questions and address concerns is valuable.

Dr. Robert Gougelet said that it is important to note that the funds are not going to a single town, but to the communities. The funds are dependent on a viable plan that is approved by the committee. The MOAs are the starting point for the communities to work together to develop the plan. Dr. Gougelet said that there are several years of history on this type of planning process, such as with the smallpox plans. Some communities are well advanced and have already accomplished a lot around immunization and prophylaxis planning and other areas. He said that consolidating that experience into regions is a significant advantage. He noted that, since New Hampshire is primarily a rural state, it is critical that local communities coordinate to be able to effectively respond to a pandemic with immunization, surge capacity and other needs. Smaller communities must work together to accomplish goals. They will need to develop an efficient process with State guidance. Dr. Gougelet said that this plan addresses the need to have funds sent directly to the local communities that has been missing in the past.

Commissioner Stephen asked if the participants on the conference call felt that they had the capacity to be able to work together and identify a single point of contact within a short period of time. He said that the single point of contact does not need to be the emergency planner or the fire chief. Commissioner Stephen said that the point of contact will coordinate the logistics of the funding and will distribute information and messages. He said that the person will act as a liaison and their name and contact information will be posted on the website.

Laura Viger, of Berlin, said that she has been meeting with a pandemic planning committee for some time. This month, they discussed the funding. She said they expressed the desire to join with Colebrook and pool their funds. Commissioner Stephen said that was consistent with the idea that Derry and Salem would also collaborate. He said that it is important to remember that the PPCC will need to accept the preliminary plan. The regions will need to appoint a fiscal agent, have every community within the region appoint someone to sign the MOA, and make sure that the region is associated with an Acute Care Hospital. Laura Viger said that their region would meet those criteria. Commissioner Stephen said it looked like they were in very good shape.

Rick Silverberg said that they were having a similar discussion in his area with three PODs interested in combining to cover their area. Commissioner Stephen noted that the PHN are not necessarily the same as the AHS. He said that there are designated AHS POD Regions. PHNs fall within these regions. Rick Silverberg said that the regions that he is dealing with overlap almost exactly with the PHN. Commissioner Stephen said that, if there was a need, they would look into modifying the AHS regions. Rick Silverberg said that all the towns would be involved so it would not be an issue. Commissioner Stephen said that it is good to work collaboratively.

Lisa Morris, of the Partnership for Public Health in the Lakes Region, noted that they plan to have a meeting in the Lakes Region specific to this topic, so it is very timely. Commissioner Stephen asked if it would be possible for groups to identify a Fiscal Agent and Point of Contact by Friday, April 28. He said this would be the end of the month, after the Fiscal Committee meets, and in good time to make the G&C meeting. Chief Klauber said that his concern would be the time needed to contact other towns and cities in the AHS that are not participating in the conference call. Commissioner Stephen said that those members who are on the conference call could contact those towns not participating and help facilitate the appointing of the Point of Contact liaison and determining the fiscal agent. He said that, if there are any problems, call either the Commissioner's office or Bruce Cheney's office for assistance. Chief Klauber said that they would telephone, email, or snail mail all the towns in their region to gain their agreement on the collaboration and on who would act as the point of contact and who would be the fiscal agent.

Laura Viger asked if each of the towns needed to sign off, or just those towns that are receiving the funds. Commissioner Stephen replied that the plans need the approval of each of the individual towns in the region. He said that they will each sign the MOA. He said that, if any city or town seems to have difficulty, Bruce Cheney's group could assist. Bruce Cheney said that it is critical that the towns clearly understand that they are all participants. He said that there could be a problem with some areas that look at this as a state problem. He said that all cities and towns need to work together.

Commissioner Stephen requested that the information on the fiscal agent, liaison contact information, and information on regions that would like to combine be submitted to Neil Twitchell, Community Public Health Development Section at ntwitchell@dhhs.state.nh.us by 4:30 PM on April 24, 2006.

Another question that needs to be addressed is what the funds can be used for. Commissioner Stephen said that the process is to go to the Fiscal Committee for approval to accept and expend the Federal funds. Then, the regions will submit their liaison contact information and fiscal agent information. The regions will work on 1-2 page pre-plan descriptions that include a budget. This pre-plan will be reviewed and approved by the Pandemic Planning Coordinating Committee. The contracts will be prepared and go to the Governor and Council for approval. The charge to the cities and towns in the regions will be to follow the plan put forward in the pre-plan submitted to and approved by the PPCC.

Jose Montero said that there will be a second conference call on May 2 at 2:00 PM that will allow a follow-up discussion.

Commissioner Stephen said that the pre-plan will include a brief outline and a budget. Items that can be included in the budget include consultants, training, supplies, meeting costs, travel, and any other expenses related to achieving the goal in the plan. It does not need to be overly detailed. Commissioner Stephen said that a template will be available on the website. The May 2 conference call will allow more in-depth discussion about what should be in the pre-plan and budget. Commissioner Stephen said that the

hope is to have the PPCC meet in mid-May. He said that they would like to be able to disperse the funds as soon as possible, although they realize that some cities and towns might already have ongoing efforts while others may not. So, some may need more time to get going.

Chief LeClaire from Portsmouth asked what the funding formula was based on. Commissioner Stephen replied that the PPCC determined the funding formula. He said that they were given a number of choices and voted to choose one. Mary Ann Cooney said that each award had a base amount plus additional based on per capita. She said that regions got different amounts based on the cities and towns within each region. Brad Manning asked if UNH was taken into consideration for the Dover Region. Jose Montero explained that each college in the state was taken into consideration for the population of the town it was located in.

Commissioner Stephen said that the PPCC members were clear that they did not want the funds dispersed on population alone. He noted that this is just phase one and there will be additional funds coming in phase two. While the procedures for phase two funds have not yet been released, they will be competitive. He said that the phase one funds are directed to strategic planning at the local level.

Commissioner Stephen said that the goal is to make sure that this is a local planning effort within the Federal guidelines, not something dictated by the State. The State will be available to provide technical assistance. Phase one will be truly local. Once the guidelines for phase two are released, Commissioner Stephen said that he would share them.

Commissioner Stephen thanked the group for participating in the conference call. He said that if anyone had questions or concerns they could reach him at 271-4331 or Mary Ann Cooney at 271-4612.

Dates to Remember:

April 28, 2006 – Due date for submission of the Point of Contact Liaison (with phone and email) and designation of fiscal agent. Send to Neil Twitchell at ntwitchell@dhhs.state.nh.us.

May 2, 2006, 2:00 PM – Conference Call – will discuss the Pre-plan requirements and guidelines – a template will be available.

The call ended at 4:25 PM.